



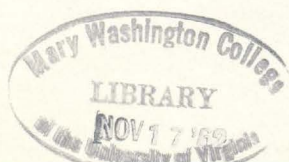
*Epank*

# *Mary Washington College*

LITERARY MAGAZINE

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# THE CONTENTS

## FICTION

|                                  |                   |    |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| <i>Waiting for (Godot)</i> ..... | Nancy Slonim      | 9  |
| <i>The Revival</i> .....         | Carol Livingstone | 14 |

## POETRY

|                                              |                 |    |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----|
| <i>The Wall</i> .....                        | Marilyn Wright  | 4  |
| <i>Birth</i> .....                           | Betty A. Ash    | 7  |
| <i>Haiku</i> .....                           | Sara Bleick     | 7  |
| <i>Naked Armor</i> .....                     | Betty A. Ash    | 8  |
| <i>The Legend of the Mulberry Tree</i> ..... | Suzanne Seeley  | 10 |
| <i>The Match</i> .....                       | Clair Golihew   | 10 |
| <i>Sea Oat</i> .....                         | Bobbi Maiden    | 12 |
| <i>Only the Rain Can Hear</i> .....          | Lori Vink       | 12 |
| <i>My Country 'Tis of Thee</i> .....         | Nancy Slonim    | 13 |
| <i>Pensamiento</i> .....                     | Sandra Linville | 21 |

## NON-FICTION

|                     |                   |   |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| <i>Nannie</i> ..... | Langhorne Scruggs | 6 |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|

## ART

|                                  |                   |    |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| <i>The Wall</i> .....            | Betsy Evans       | 5  |
| <i>Pen and Ink Drawing</i> ..... | Carlton S. Abbott | 8  |
| <i>Caricature</i> .....          | Carlton S. Abbott | 13 |
| <i>La Pensativa</i> .....        | Alice Boyd        | 21 |

# First Prize Poetry

## THE WALL

*Marilyn Wright - '66*

At the dawn of time  
A group of men,  
A thousand strong,  
Braved the dangers of the jungle  
To search of a paradise.  
Soon they knew it was in vain;  
The spark of life was fading.

Ahead they saw  
A quiet spot,  
And there began to build  
A moment to their struggle.  
They built a wall of massive stone,  
To last forever.  
And the men,  
Near their goal,  
Died within its shade.

The years passed  
And there appeared  
A tiny crack  
In the ancient wall,  
Now overgrown with rose and  
thorn,  
But was unseen  
By men who looked and passed  
on.

With lustful force,  
Like a weed it grew,  
And tendrils spread  
And devoured.

One day the wall crumbled.

Men came and stared,  
And astonished said,  
"We meant to repair,  
We didn't have time."

Some wept over the loss,  
While others gloated over the  
    final weakening.

They left,  
Leaving the crumbled mass to the  
    night.

The Bird of Paradise flew down  
On a single shaft of moonlight,  
And perched on a tree limb  
High above the jungle floor.  
Below, the Spanish moss hung  
    about like fallen dreams—  
Clinging and ghostlike.

The Great Bird,  
His brilliant plumes unruffled,  
Bowed his head in sorrow,  
For freedom was no more.



*Betsy Evans - '63*

# NANNIE

*Langhorne Scruggs - '64*

I climbed the stairs to the big white building and walked through the door. Once inside, the air was suffocating and I longed for the cool crispness I had left. Slowly I walked down the dim corridor. The only sound was that of my reverberating footsteps. A white starched figure walked noiselessly towards me.

"She's waiting for you," the nurse said softly.

I smiled and went to the end of the hall. A small withered old figure sat solemnly in a rocking chair, staring blankly ahead, seeing nothing but the past. I held my arms out to her and embraced her lovingly.

"It's me, Langhorne, Nannie."

"Lang," she murmured, "Oh, Lang I'm so glad to see you."

I sat down beside my great grandmother and held her cold bony hand in mine.

"You look well, Nan. How do you feel?"

"Oh, I don't know," she answered dully. "The same."

That was my cue. I got up and went into her room to get her book of poems. That always cheered her.

"Read to me, Nan."

A slight smile stole across her lips.

"All right. If you really want me to. Are you tired of hearing them?"

"Oh, no, I'll never get tired of hearing your poems."

I opened the book and set it in her lap. She began to read with her usual moving expression. I sat entranced as I always did and marveled at the metamorphosis of my beloved great grandmother. Her soft amber eyes shown brightly, her pale lips smiled and her withered cheeks glowed with life. It was like old times.

After she finished, we both cried -- she for the old days and I for the beauty of her poetry. We dried our tears and went outside for a walk around the grounds. With Nannie using my right arm as a support for her weak limbs, we made our way down the stone steps. She breathed deeply of the fresh November air and exclaimed at the beauty around her -- the icy blue sky, the golden sun, the green grass. We sat down on our favorite bench and Nannie began reciting one of her poems.

"There's a little crooked path that leads to Mother's down the hill,  
And in the big white house she sits in dainty cap and frill,  
With, with — — —"

She held her head in her hands and sobbed, "I can't remember; I can't remember. It's no use."

"Sure you can, Nan. It'll come back to you." I soothed. "Don't worry. We'd better be starting back now; it's getting late."

We walked across the lawn arm in arm. Twilight was falling. A dead leaf fell from a tree.

We entered the building and walked down the grey hall.

"Don't go, Lang."

"I have to, Nan, but I'll be back tomorrow."

I kissed her cheek and walked quickly away. I paused for a moment at the door and looked back with tears in my eyes. The Nannie I loved was gone. In her place sat a lifeless form staring blankly into space.

## Birth

Betty A. Ash - '63

An essence of visible hope  
Perfumed, yet bitter  
Long slender fingers  
Of rapturous beauty  
Creating striking designs  
Of brilliance  
Rose-hued and all-embracing  
Across the tattered fabric  
The echo of a prayer . . .  
The dawn is born.

## Haiku

Sara Bleick - '64

*White, quiet snow world  
Mutes even skiers' voices  
Midst the thrusting pines.*

*Cloud curls gently kiss  
The sea's grey curving shoulders  
With still loneliness.*

*White, wan and waif-like  
Children clouds spring from the  
thighs  
Of mute sea and sky.*

*Setting sun's last rays  
Garb the trees in golden gowns  
Wedding night day.*

*Sucking dark of night  
Draws the pain of daylight hours  
Into bright array.*

## Naked Armor

Betty A. Ash - '63

Sprites, garbed in truth, marching,  
Askance I envision the proces-  
sional.

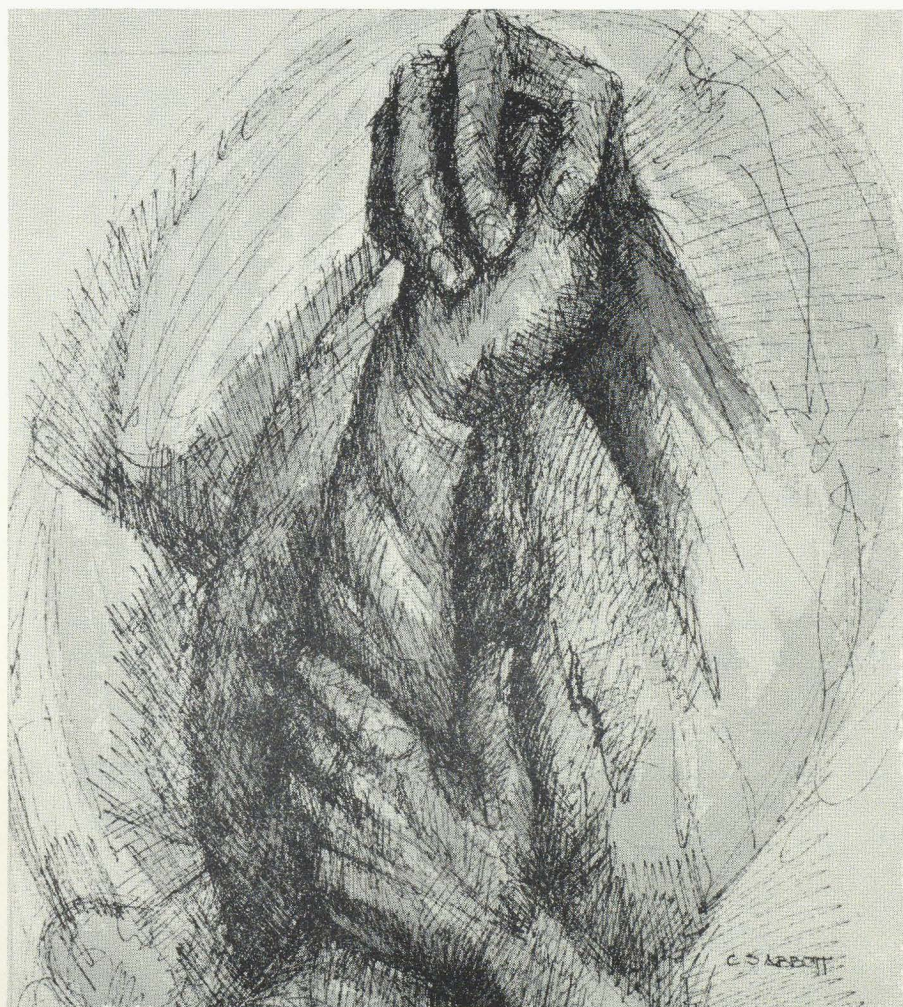
A column of paper-thin men  
With a breath, paper whispers  
And men flutter.

I cannot understand what force  
Nails their countenance to this  
earth.

Strange to note that the flutter-  
ings

Do not terminate in failings.

No man topples -- his nakedness is  
his strength.



## First Prize Prose

### WAITING FOR (GODOT)

*Nancy Slonim - '63*

I wish they'd get here. I sure wish they'd get here. It's not that I don't like this place. I mean, it's o.k., but I wish they'd come. It's funny, I was trying to figure out what I don't like about this place . . . I've been here long enough to find things I don't like . . . and I can't name anything that really bothers me. What bothers me is the fact that they promised they'd come back and get me, and I've been sitting here for . . . well . . . for I don't know how long like this. You sort of lose your identity when you're alone too long like this. I think my identity must mean a lot to me because I think about it all the time. Even when I was very young, I used to make the good guy ride a gray flecked horse, and sometimes I'd make the kids pretend the horse had a limp so they wouldn't think of it as just the "good guy's horse." Then they'd all feel sorry for it, and I never really liked that either. I mean that wasn't what I had intended when I made him gray, so I'd quit playing altogether. I think I know what I don't like about this place. It's up too high. That's it! I remember climbing all those stairs and wondering why anyone would want to build a house with so many stairs. Not that I'm afraid of stairs. Don't get me wrong. I'm not afraid of anything. I just don't like those stairs. I probably hate being up this high because it makes me lightheaded, and I can't really think too clearly. We used to play king of the mountain and since I was the biggest, I got to be king all the time. It was no fun to be king when I never had a queen. And when you were king you were always alone working out the problems of the kingdom and never got to have any fun. They should be getting here any minute. I keep rambling on like this as if I had all the time in the world, but I don't. They're going to be here and I'll have to run. I wouldn't keep them waiting as they have done to me. Frankly, I think it's very rude. I know what I don't like . . . these walls. They're so bare. There's nothing on them. There's only one window here. I like lots of windows, but there is only one window here. I hate to look out this window because it's such a long way down. I can't understand what's keeping them. I had a lot of windows in my room. That's right. I said MY room. What's so strange about my having a room? I wonder what my room looks like now. The teacher told us to draw a robin and then we could paint it. I painted mine blue with a black breast and the teacher told me mine was wrong. She said robins were brown with red breasts. She hung the others up on the bulletin board on Monday. I told her it was my robin and I could make him any color I wanted, and she said I was being disrespectful. Ever since then all my robins have been brown and red. I hung my robin up in my room on Tuesday. I wonder if he's still there. It's been such a long time since I've seen my room . . . but I'm going back. They're coming for me . . . did I tell you they were coming for me? Well, they are you know. It's so dark in here. It's probably because this place is so high up. I don't think I feel very well. I hate to lie down because then I might not see them coming. I suppose I'll hear them though. Everything echoes in here. Come to think of it. I've never heard any noises, but if there were any I bet they would echo. Shhhhhhhhhh . . . everybody be quiet. I'm king of the mountain and the kingdom must remain silent for the coronation of the queen . . .

## *The Match*

*Clair Golihew - '66*

The match  
Lived a short life  
Between two glows  
In the dark night  
It was a flash  
Between two close heads  
It shined long enough  
To see love  
Then died  
Content

## *The Legend Of The Mulberry Tree*

*Suzanne Seeley '63*

In Babylon there were two homes  
Divided by one wall,  
And side by side two lovers grew  
Despite what would befall.

Pyramus was a handsome youth  
With moonlight in his eyes,  
And Thisbe, fairest of all maids,  
Did dream with perfumed sighs.

Their parents had forbade their love,  
The two could not unite,  
But through a small crack in the wall  
They whispered through the night.

Their words were uttered tenderly  
As chants sung to the gods,  
And told of Love's flame browning all  
The yellow goldenrods.

Pyramus sought to slip away  
And Thisbe heard his pleas:  
"Oh, meet me where the stars are white  
As fruit of mulberry trees."

At last the sea submerged the sun  
And night inked black the sky,  
And Thisbe crept to find the tomb,  
The mulberry tree nearby.

Though love had made her somewhat bold  
Alone, she was afraid,  
And suddenly a she-lion came,  
Jaws bloody from her raid.

Poor Thisbe fled, and dropped her cloak,  
Which by the lion was found,  
All torn and mouthed in bloody shreds,  
It lay upon the ground.

Pyramus soon appeared, and saw  
The stained cloak of his love,  
The lion's tracks increased his grief,  
His cries were heard above.

He put his cloak upon the tree  
And kissed it fond adieu,  
Then drew his sword and cried aloud:  
"You shall drink my blood, too!"

The faithful Thisbe soon returned,  
Her lover not to fail,  
She found the tree with crimson fruit  
Instead of white and pale.

She saw the form of Pyramus  
And kissed him with a cry,  
Encircled in her arms he smiled  
And closed his eyes to die.

She saw the sword and tattered cloak  
Beside her love and saith :  
"To keep our love I, too, will die  
To be with you in death."

The sword, still wet from his life's blood,  
Was plunged into her heart,  
And thus the lovers still were free  
To love and never part.

The mulberries that were snow-white  
Have since been crimson red  
In memory of their lasting love,  
Of love that is not dead.

## Honorable Mention

### SEA OAT

*Bobbi Maiden - 64*

Sea oat -- strange yet common  
    beauty --  
Bending in the golden wind  
Standing lone on crescent beach  
Draws life from the barren sand

Gentle sea oat, image of the  
Lone, long, lowest flight  
Of the sleek and slender gull  
Sliding through the golden air

Unnoticed in its gentle place  
Beside the silver sea  
Bristles, tawny white 'gainst sky  
Gold stalk by golden sea

Colorless and artless  
Yet still by guile unknown  
The sea oat lifts her heavy head  
To reach the golden sun

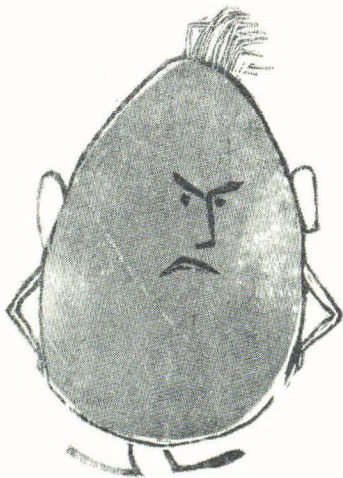
### ONLY THE RAIN CAN HEAR

*Lori Vink - '65*

Only the rain can hear  
Only the wind will care  
A hungry child, I run to the arms  
    of the night.

My eyes are glass jewels  
Wash them with rain-tears.  
My shoulders are cool  
Burn them with fire.  
My young feet are swift  
Break them a pathway.  
Search for the thoughts which have  
    fled to the night.

I am the night  
    Trapped in a body  
Animal night  
    In young girl's soft form  
Catlike I claw, claw through the  
    cotton  
Tear my way out with the teeth  
    of the night.



"THE UGLY AMERICAN"

*Carlton S. Abbott - '63*

## My Country 'Tis of Thee

Nancy Slonim - '63

He says I have a death wish  
He must be right because I pay him \$100 a visit to tell me the truth  
And so I have a death wish.  
I wish dead roses for December debutantes  
I wish Ayn's title had been "We the Dying"  
And I wish G. B. S. had had a "Death Force"  
Why couldn't it be "Death, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"?  
Life and Liberty are the same aren't they?  
After all this is America!  
He lives in Mississippi though  
I mean he dies in Mississippi though  
I want my dentist to have the *Saturday Evening Post* and Death  
So I can laugh before I cry or do before I die  
I can you know -- after all, this is America!  
I hear America singing.  
They're singing the funeral dirge.  
It's lovely  
I wish it were more popular.  
Die and let die is more fitting  
If you do it in one sitting  
But this is America and you have to make a down payment  
The die-away plan  
Die today - never pay! Ha! That'll kill 'em.  
I wish Hamlet had done himself in instead of talking about it so much  
Methinks the boy spoke too tough  
And then he didn't do enough.  
I wish all black bubble gum would die  
Then the odds to getting one would be greater and  
I'd bet a daily double on a pitch black double bubble  
I wish all girls would go where the boys are and then I could  
Stay here and read *Tom Jones* in peace  
Not in *War and Peace* -- This is America, remember? Not Mississippi  
Mommy, is Mississippi a different continent?  
Yes dear.  
Everything is good in North America; everything is pink, puffy and  
peppermint  
I wish all parking lot signs would say Filled  
And then the Beardsly's would be late for curtain  
Society better not arrive late for my play or my audiences  
Will be guaranteed Bourgeoise—or your money back  
Which would you rather have  
High society or low taxes?  
I agree. A low green fee should tactfully hint the tipper  
For this is America and tipping is allowed  
Or did you think you were in Mississippi?  
I know a boy who worked hard for his tip.  
Now he's dead.  
He must have had a death wish too.

## \* THE REVIVAL

Carol Livingstone - '62

The Baptists are noted for building with brick. This tends to give their churches a look of substantiality and good standing in the neighborhood that, when they are surrounded by equally substantial looking private homes, makes it difficult to pick out the church from among its similar neighbors. This chameleon quality is heightened by the habit which many churches have of building their "educational buildings" first and holding services in them until the sanctuary can be completed. Were it not for the characteristic sign out front announcing the subject for next Sunday's sermon, you might miss the church completely.

Unobtrusiveness is not, however, applicable to the Lambert Avenue Baptist Church in Skyland. No one is able to resist looking at it as he goes by, whether he be headed for downtown Skyland or Otterbridge, because it is on its own hill. The hill belongs only to the church, the surrounding houses being at least twenty feet below it, and is unusual in the fact that it begins its rapid ascent at the boundary of church property, levels out more or less under the church building itself, and immediately plunges back to the ground. In other words, the edifice is perched on a large earthen gumdrop.

Inside, the church is much like any other small church in a southern town. It is the smell, of course, that brings itself immediately to the visitor's attention: a smell of damp foundation, a musty smell of dust and mildewed hymnals and old carpet. There is nothing unusual about the cardboard fans which open to display a butterfly-shaped lake scene, the two independent edges of the center not meeting at all so that the picture looks as if it were being held half under water. The rows of theater seats that were bought wholesale from the Old North State movie house when it went out of business squish admonishingly when sat upon. A good-sized congregation produces a loud "SSHHHH!" that sounds like the warnings of angels that the sermon merits close attention.

The pride and joy of the Lambert Avenue Baptists, and the thing that sets them apart from other Avenue Baptists, is their baptismal pool, an eight-foot-square, six-foot-deep, sky-blue sunken pool. It is surrounded by gleaming brass rails and outfitted with shallow cement steps leading to the pool's bottom. But all these merits are secondary, for the pool is backed by a huge mural, a panoramic view in pale blues and greens and pale browns of an ersatz Jordan landscape that, as the deacon's wife Mrs. Tilletson has said many a time, "Just brings tears to my eyes every time I look at it." In the time of the Reverend Paster Brock, when his regular bi-annual baptismal rites were observed, and the maroon denim cover which usually covered the pool was removed, and the carefully-aimed spotlights were turned on, and the tepid water was run into the pool, Lambert Avenue Baptists cancelled all other plans. This was more than a service; it was an Occasion.

For it was at baptismal time that the pride of the church was at its most moving. To see that landscape and hear the rippling of sacred waters was the most convincing religious experience that most of the congregation would even know. And to do it justice, it was handled by the Reverend Pastor Brock as tastefully as was possible. Of course he always

\*This is one of five stories by Carol Livingstone written as an honors project in 1961-62.

had the problem of knowing what to do with himself when the last total-immerses had dripped up the steps and into the "wings" of his study. After all, there he stood thorax-deep in his sopping black robes, and to clamor up to his polished pine pulpit in that condition would have brought on not only an unavoidable giggle from the less impassioned members of the church, but the absolute heart failure of the Ladies' Bible Study Group when they saw water (albeit holy water) dripping on their hard-bargained wine carpet.

This problem he solved by delivering a brief sermon and holding the closing hymn from the pool. After the congregation had left, there was no one to see his undignified ascent but the deacons, who were by that time without illusions about church rituals anyhow, having crumpled enough Saltine crackers and poured enough Welch's grape juice to know that these things do not just happen.

Pastor Brock's concern with making a dignified end to the baptismal service must not be taken to mean that he was a man overly preoccupied with his own pride. In fact, he was the first to deny all claim to dignity. He liked to fancy himself an humble man of God; a rustic shepherd, or merely a grey-haired old elevator operator to Salvation, gently and persistently calling, "Goin' up!" The latter vision was his favorite, which he often pondered comfortably after a heavy dinner, his stomach full of Martha's spoon bread, and wondered how to work into a sermon.

Along with these two pictures of Pastor Brock concerning himself as a minister, the shepherd and the elevator operator, went one indispensable affectation: the children. It was necessary that a man of his temperament complete the picture of the kindly clergyman by being constantly surrounded by the dancing, rosy-cheeked children of the congregation. These he edited carefully as to size, innocence of expression, and photogenic qualities, and by careful discouragement and selective over-kindness, he had built up in a matter of a few Sundays a small court of pretty little girls and boys who clustered around him before and after services and on all church occasions. They followed him like a little ring of auxiliary planets, and he was careful to keep a hand on the head of one of them at all times. He had read "The Deserted Village," and he liked the image.

His kindly cocker-spaniel face and quiet voice made him naturally attractive to the younger members of the fold, and a very strange side-effect had taken place. Little by little, these babes had begun to see the light. They were getting saved. The youngest so far had been eight years old, and in his last baptism he had immersed no fewer than six of these children. It had made talk in the congregation, since some of the more conservative members of the church body felt that these young professors of the faith were too young to know what they were doing. A few of the children's own parents had objected, notably the little Macklinson girl's father, who had been almost angry. Fortunately, he was not a member of the church, but a Methodist, which made his objections void.

Pastor Brock firmly believed that these children had been brushed by the wings of angels, that they knew more simply and purely the wonder of God than did the older and more time-worn followers of the faith. It was good for those who were tempted to stray from the path to see a small, bewildered child step forward in perfect credulity.

It was necessary, however—and this he sensed in his bones, almost as a gambler feels an imminent good time to bluff his way into taking the whole pot—to do something immediately to unite the congregation on the question of the children. He was not about to give up those children.

He had prayed about it. The answer had come almost immediately: he would hold a revival.

# I

Baby Sister tumbled out of the back seat onto the gravelled parking lot of the elementary school, where she jiggled impatiently. "Why'd we hafta park way over heah?" she whined.

Her mother and Mrs. Leaman were gathering their things about them in the front seat as if they were going to take a long and dangerous journey. "Because," her mother answered, "It is too crowded in front of th' church. I told you that. Ah you goin' ta whine?"

Mrs. Leaman stepped out of the car and leaned over, smelling of mildew. "Don't spoil the wonderful beginnin' you've made, Baby Sistah. You can't afford to spoil it. "You can't afford it." You can't afford it. You can't a . . . FORD it," she whispered fiercely in Baby Sister's ear. The Lord's watchin' you this minute." She laid a cold, dry hand on her arm.

Baby Sister cringed. Something about Mrs. Leaman made her want to shout "Damn!" at the top of her lungs.

Her father leaned out of his window. "Can ah smoke ovah theah?" he rumbled.

"Bill!" You know you can't."

"Well, ah'm gonna sit heah and finish this cigarette. Thing won't staht till everybody's on the edge of their seat anyhow."

"Me too! Me too! I'll stay with you, Daddy!" Baby Sister shouted. Maybe if she went in with him, she wouldn't have to sit by Mrs. Leaman. Mrs. Leaman always murmured, "Make it so, Lord; Amen, Lord; Yes, Lord," during the prayers, and it embarrassed her half to death.

As her mother and Mrs. Leaman wended their way across the school parking lot to the church, she drew a sigh of relief and fell into the front seat by her father. "Upchurck," she muttered.

Her father coughed. "What?"

"Daddy Bill, that woman makes me want to upchurck."

"That's not nice." He smoked in silence. He smiled.

Baby sister leaned against the door and looked at her father. *There sits the humble elder father and here is his poor white child, his youngest born, dedicated at a young early age to follow the Cross. Yes, yes, she will follow, over the hills of Jordan and into the deserts of trial and anguish . . .*

Her father reached over and pulled up one of her socks. "Doodle."

"What."

"Why did you join the church?"

Baby Sister looked into the filled ash-tray in the dashboard. *Because Patsy Linsey did and she will never get ahead of me.* "You shouldn't smoke so much, father," she said, shaking her head wisely.

"What?"

"It is a sin to injure your health." *And lo, a little child will lead them.*

He gnashed his teeth. "Miss Doodle, don't you chime in with youah mothah," he said. "Ah've been smokin' two packs o' Picayune cigarettes a day since I was seventeen an' this is no time to slow down."

"It's bad for you, Daddy Bill."

"You know nothin' about it. Youah just sayin' what you've heard y'momma say a million times. An' have ah stopped?"

"No."

"Then it figuahs that ah'm not goin' to."

They were silent. She wondered what heaven would be like without Daddy Bill. He talked like no one she knew except her mother, with a slow Georgia drawl. Wouldn't heaven be lonely without it. She'd have to petition to have him let in, yes. She could see herself in her white baptism dress (still dripping wet), begging and pleading at the Throne for them to let in sinful old Daddy Bill. *He never meant to sin, it's just that he likes a cigarette every minute.*

As if to let her know he didn't care, he suddenly threw back his head and began to sing his shaving song:

"A hefty guy bumped into herrr,  
He musta been a crook —  
He knocked her down upon the ground  
And broke her pocketbook. O-ohhhh,  
It bruised her somewhat . . ."

Baby Sister saw over her father's shoulder the huge, bent form of Pastor Brock, heading across the parking lot to the church. He saw them.

"Daddy Bill! There's Pastor Brock. SHHH!"

Her father looked behind him, pointed friendlily at that frowning member of the clergy, and continued:

"And it hurt her otherwise,  
But ah'm . . . a-glad it did not injure her  
elsewhere!"

"Evenin' Reverend."

Pastor Brock's face hardened. "Good evening, Mr. Macklinson. You are attending the revival?"

"Thought I would, yes."

"Well." Pastor Brock still hesitated stiffly beside the car.

"Reckon ah need it as much as anybody."

The minister smiled sardonically.

"At least *ah* am old enough to know what you mean when you say hell-fiah."

"Mr. Macklinson, I hardly think—"

What is the subject of the revival speakah's speech, Reverend?"

"Sins—of—the—flesh," He dropped his words as if they were rocks. Baby Sister looked at Daddy Bill. He was laughing, but he didn't look very happy.

"Now that's a real good sermon, Reverend. These children need to heah about that. Why, Miss Doodle heah is about the most carnal nine-year-old . . ."

Pastor Brock's eyes flashed. Baby Sister thought he looked just like that picture of Christ with the big whip at the church bazaar. "I think the child should come in with me, Mr. Macklinson. If you plan to come in, you would do well to do so before long. The meeting should begin in five or ten minutes." He held out his hand to the child.

Baby Sister got out of the car. "Hurry and finish your cigarette, Daddy Bill," she called over her shoulder.

Her father nodded sardonically. "Fore long," he agreed.

Baby Sister walked along beside the minister, taking two steps to his one. *Now Pastor Brock looks like an apostle. Epistle -- Apostle. He looks so stern and weary and heavy laden. Poor man of God. Blessed are those.* "Will Daddy Bill come in, do you think?"

"Ah, my child. He will come. They will come, those."

I think he's getting out of the car now."

"They always come, those."

Did he mean those Methodists? They climbed the steep drive to the church. It was so steep that it made you want to put your hands down and crawl up. Daddy Bill said that they'd done that to show the sinners that it was no easy matter to reach salvation, but Baby Sister knew they'd done it to save money. If they'd had steps made, it would have cost a lot and they wouldn't have been able to have such a nice baptising pool. Patsy Linsey said so.

Her mother and Mrs. Leaman were sitting on a front row, right beside Miss Foontz, the organist. Miss Foontz had sugar-die-bee-tease, but she kept right on going.

"Pastor Brock, isn't it wonderful how Miss Foontz shoulders her cross?"

"Yes indeed, child. Good evening, Mrs. Macklinson, Mrs. Leaman." He smiled at the full rows of people behind her mother and Mrs. Leaman. There was a good crowd, and there was Patsy Linsey looking smart-alecky in that blue satin tacky dress her mother had made her. *Blue satin at a revival, ha! Anyway he has his hand on my head, not hers, so she doesn't know so much after all.*

"Mrs. Leaman, I believe you wanted to know about the evangelist."

"Sure do, Pastor Brock." She pursed her mouth and looked wise. "Where's this man from, anyhow? I never heard of Wildry Farrell."

"He is a traveling man, Mrs. Leaman, originally from Erwin, Tennessee."

"Well, what's he doing here? Those Tennessee ones ought to stay in their own territory."

"He is out of work. A true man of the faith, but he is a little older now, and as you know—" he sighed. "As you know, the younger generation is taking over."

Mrs. Leaman looked mad. She thought Pastor Brock meant she was one of the old ones, probably. She was, too. "How much we pain' him?"

"A small fee," Pastor Brock said, and frowned. "If you will excuse me—" and he went off into his study.

Mrs. Leaman plumped back in her seat. "Well I goodness!"

The church was filling up and getting quiet. Miss Foontz played "I Come to the Garden Alone," shouldering her cross with a will. Baby Sister looked around, feeling satisfied. Old Mrs. Jones was smiling at her and she knew that it was because she looked angelic and almost in heaven already. *Now it will be just like being grown up because we all are serious and all here for the same thing and all the same in the eyes of the Lord.* She picked up one of the hymn books and began to study it. *Let them see that little children suffered to come unto the Lord are a . . . shining example.*

In a minute, Pastor Brook came out of his study leading a small, jittery man in a shiny suit. The light hitting his glasses made the man's eyes look like two silver dollars. The church quieted down without Pastor Brock's saying anything.

"Our speaker for the evening is the Reverend Wildry Farrell of Tennessee. Now I know I do not need to —"

Baby Sister sat forward on her seat. *He might even call me up to the front as a good example. And now the people of God will be at peace. We will be refreshed in the presence of our enemies. And I'm one of them. Because I'm just as smart as Patsy Linsey and because it is comfortable like home. Now we are saved. That means safe inside here and warm and com-*

fortable where nothing can get us. And he has come to tell us how glad we should be.

"Brothers and a-sisters," the little man began. "Brothers and a-sisters—" Her father sat down in the empty seat beside her.

Do ye a-know that ever' member here is about to burn? Do ye a-know . . . did ye ever stop to think that yew are in as much danger as a man who has never seen God? NO! YE'RE IN MORE! Because yew know . . . yew know and ye follow not.

"How many of ye tithe? How minny of ye never spread a word of gawspip? How minny of ye can trewthfully say—that ye hev never knowed a minnit of cornal lust?"

Babby Sister looked at her mother. She was looking at the floor. She looked at her father. He was looking at the floor. "Momma, what's a cornal—?" Her mother shook her head at her.

The man pounded the pulpit with the Bible that Mrs. Greeber's family had donated last Easter. Baby sister looked at Mrs. Greeber. Mrs. Greeber looked at the floor. The man was starting to yell.

*What does he mean. He's scaring everybody to death. And he didn't even notice such a little girl as me on the front row with all the other members.*

"AND TOBACCY! With that I know I don't need to point. I'll bet ye forty per cent of ye smoke like chimneys, an'—

"My brothers an' sisters ye're defilin'!

I say defilin'!

Your lungs with the smoke of that filthy weed.

That devil's idle plaything . . .

That sinful toy for wastrels

With nothin' better to do

Than put a-fumes in the temple!

Yes, SMOKIN' up the house

Where the Lord himself doth dwell!

CHOKIN' him out!

S'what you're a-doin', ever' time ye light up a match

And rare back with one of them sinful, wasteful pleasures!

Them coffin nails!

THAT'S NICOTEEN!

NICK-OH-TEEEEN, my friends,

AND THAT'S POISON! Oh, yes, praise the Lord,

They put ten drops of that vile chemical

Into a gallon of water, gave it to a dog . . .

Praise God, he drank his fill . . .

And inside a hour; He was stone! cold! dead!

Praise the Lord, they put ten drops

Of that murderous stuff in two gallons of water,

Gave it to a dog, he drank his fill . . .

And inside a hour! He was stone! Cold! dead!

Praise the Lord! Brothers! Sisters!

Don't ye see what ye're a-doin'!"

*It's a kind of song he's singing. Don't think about what he's saying, it's too ugly. He doesn't mean it anyhow. It's one of those little tests Pastor Brock talks about that come up to see if you're strong. It's just a little song. Don't think about it. Think the picture behind the pool. Think the way the choir's cubby-hole is shaped like a peeled potato, round but with a lot of flat places all the way around. Think how if we stand up to sing*

*a hymn and sit down again the angel voices will comfort us from the seats, telling us ssshhhh, it's all right. Shhh. Ssshhhh.*

It didn't look like just a little test, though. Some of the women were crying. Was it because he had pounded on the Bible that Mrs. Greeber gave, and because she was such a sweet lady and always said morning prayers in church on Easter Sunday and times like that, just talking to God like He was a good friend and she had a lot of things she could hardly wait to tell Him?

Finally he stopped shouting. He sounded hoarse, and perspiration was running down his pale face, with the eyes that looked like silver dollars. He said a very quiet prayer that didn't make much sense, and he was almost whispering so that he was almost drowned out by women's sniffing. They didn't sing a final hymn, which Baby Sister thought was just as well, since nobody seemed to feel like singing.

When at last Pastor Brock had weakly given the benediction, and they filed out, nobody said a word. On the way to the car, there wasn't a sound, except for Mrs. Leaman's humming of a few notes down the scale, as if she were getting ready to make a remark that would wind up the evening, but couldn't think of one.

They rode silently, her mother and father silently sitting in the front seat, she and Mrs. Leaman silently sitting in the back. Mrs. Leaman kept fixing her gloves in her lap and settling her hat on her head. She was smiling. Daddy Bill did do one thing to make a little noise. All the way home, Baby Sister could hear him crackling the paper around his cigarette package. She wanted to cry. But Mrs. Leaman was watching her, and she would not let that old biddy see her cry.

"Thinking pretty thoughts, dear?" Mrs. Leaman asked.

Her father and mother were looking straight ahead. She made a face at Mrs. Leaman.

## II

"Doodle?" It was Daddy Bill.

"Whut."

"What are you cryin' up here for? You'ah supposed to be asleep, m'deah."

"Daddy . . ."

"H'm." He sat down on the edge of the bed.

"Daddy, did you like that revival tonight?"

"Well . . . not too much."

"How'd you hear me crying?"

"Oh, I was just walkin' around in the side yahd, and—ah—there was some boo-hoo sound comin' from up heah."

"Doin' what."

"What."

"Doin' what in the side yard."

"Just—havin' a cigarette."

"You don't have to go outside to do it."

"Well. . . What you cryin' for?"

"Because—" She burst into tears again.

"Now look heah. You'ah gonna make you'self sick. What is the mattah?"

"Poisonin'—"

"What."

"Poisonin' all those dogs."

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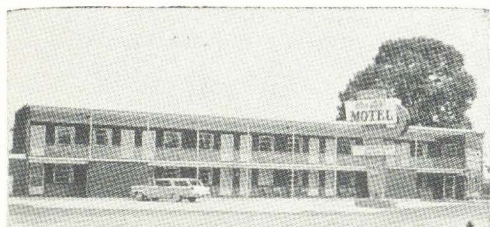
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